

PREVALENCE OF DYSMENORRHEA AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH MENSTRUAL CYCLE CHARACTERISTICS AMONG FEMALE UNDERGRADUATES RESIDING IN HOSTELS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SRI JAYEWARDENEPURA IN SRI LANKA

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Dysmenorrhea is characterized by painful menstruation and stands as a prevalent issue in women's gynaecological concerns. Despite its frequent occurrence, it remains underdiagnosed and underrated. This study was undertaken to assess the prevalence of dysmenorrhea and its association with menstrual cycle characteristics among female undergraduates residing in hostels of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. An ethically approved cross-sectional study was conducted among 218 female undergraduates. Participants were selected through a simple random sampling method. Demographic data and menstrual cycle characteristics within the past two years were gathered through a self-administered questionnaire. Diagnosis of dysmenorrhea and severity grading were based on the assessment of WaLIDD score variables, including working ability, location, intensity, and duration of pain. Data were analysed using Pearson's chi-square test and Mann-Whitney U test. Study participants had a mean age of 23.75 (\pm 1.68) years. Among them, 215 (98.6%) had dysmenorrhea; 33 (15.1%) had mild dysmenorrhea, 139 (63.8%) had moderate dysmenorrhea, and 43 (19.7%) had severe dysmenorrhea. There were statistically significant associations between mild dysmenorrhea with passage of clots ($p = 0.03$) and taking painkillers ($p < 0.001$), moderate dysmenorrhea with length of the longest menstrual cycle within the past two years ($p = 0.019$), and severe dysmenorrhea with passage of clots ($p = 0.002$) and taking painkillers ($p < 0.001$). There were no statistically significant associations between dysmenorrhea and the regularity of the menstrual cycle, age at menarche, family history, number of heaviest bleeding days, and number of sanitary napkins used ($p < 0.05$). The study found a high prevalence of dysmenorrhea, surpassing comparable previous studies. Despite this high prevalence, most participants had not sought medical advice. Addressing this concern will significantly enhance the quality of life in female undergraduates, allowing them to achieve high in their academic and personal lives.

Keywords: Dysmenorrhea, Female undergraduates, Menstrual cycle, WaLIDD score